

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 GEORGE 01741 01 OF 02 311704Z

65 42

ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 IO-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

ARAE-00 CIAE-00 SP-02 EB-03 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-01

DODE-00 PM-03 L-01 EUR-08 AF-04 NEA-07 H-01 DHA-02

ACDA-10 IGA-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /080 W
----- 054575

P R 311400Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3328

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1741

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GY

SUBJECT: BURNHAM COMMENTS ON GUYANA'S POLICIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

SUMMARY: DURING A DISCUSSION WITH ME AUGUST 25, PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM ATTRIBUTED THE DETERIORATION IN US-GUYANESE RELATIONS DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS TO THE ADVERSE REACTION OF THE UNITED STATES GOVT TO GUYANA'S DECISION TO ORIENT ITS ECONOMY ALONG SOCIALIST LINES. HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE RELATIONSHIP IMPROVE AND SUGGESTED THAT THE USG COULD RESTORE GOOD RELATIONS WITH GUYANA BY FINDING A WAY TO RESUME ITS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND BY DAMPENING, RATHER THAN CONTRIBUTING TO, ATTACKS ON GUYANA IN THE US PRESS. BURNHAM REAFFIRMED HIS COMMITMENT TO GUYANA'S BRAND OF SOCIALISM WHICH HE EMPHASIZED WAS NOT THAT OF THE SOVIET UNION. HE ALSO ASSERTED THAT GUYANA AND THE US WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF SOME MULTILATERAL ISSUES, BUT THAT SHOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THEIR BILATERAL RELATIONS. ALTHOUGH HE MADE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 GEORGE 01741 01 OF 02 311704Z

CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT CHANGE GUYANA'S SOCIALIST COURSE OR ITS

UN VOTES TO IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP AND ALSO SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT "CRAWL ON HIS KNEES" TO RECEIVE US AID, THESE BLUFF WORDS APPEARED TO BE COMPENSATION TO HIS PRIDE AND EGO FOR THE ADMISSION THAT HE WANTS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES. I SUSPECT BURNHAM HAS LEARNED THAT THE SOVIET UNION WILL NOT POUR SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF ECONOMIC AID INTO A SMALL NON-ALIGNED QUASI-SOCIALIST COUNTRY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE. ALSO, HE NOW KNOWS THAT THE ARABS ARE NOT EASY TOUCHES FOR THEIR POORER THIRD WORLD COUSINS. ALTHOUGH BURNHAM DID NOT MENTION IT, CRITICISM OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE GUYANESE PRESS DURING THE PAST THREE MONTHS HAS BEEN NOTICEABLY REDUCED. THIS TOO, WHILE LESS EXPLICIT, IS AN INDICATION THAT BURNHAM REALIZES THAT HE LET HIS GOVT'S RELATIONS WITH THE US SINK TOO LOW.

END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A DISCUSSION AT HIS BELFIED HOUSE AUGUST 25, PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM AND I DISCUSSED ASPECTS OF US-GUYANESE RELATIONS, US DIPLOMACY, EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES IN AFRICA, GUYANA'S SOCIALISM AND HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, GUYANA'S NON-ALIGNMENT AND GUYANA'S NEED FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. THIS CABLE FOCUSES PRIMARILY ON HIS COMMENTS ON US-GUYANESE RELATIONS. HIS COMMENTS ON THE NASC WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY. A MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION IS BEING POUCHED TO ARA/CAR.

2. FULLY ONE FOURTH OF OUR ONE HOUR AND TWENTY-FIVE MINUTE CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON AFRICA AND LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. BURNHAM FELT THE US HAD LOST GOOD WILL AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN AFRICA. IT WAS NOW TOO LATE FOR THE US TO REGAIN ITS INFLUENCE AND PRESTIGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE CHANCE HAD BEEN LOST FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEMS. I DISAGREED WITH BURNHAM'S ANALYSIS, CITING SECRETARY KISSINGER'S RECENT INITIATIVES AND MY IMPRESSION THAT AFRICAN LEADERS WOULD STILL WELCOME US INITIATIVES.

3. BURNHAM SAID THAT THE US REACTIONS TO GUYANA'S DECISION TO DEVELOP A SOCIALIST ECONOMY HAD CAUSED RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES TO DETERIORATE. HE BELIEVED FIRMLY THAT THE KIND OF NON-DOCTRINAIRE SOCIALIST ECONOMY WHICH GUYANA WAS ESTABLISHING WAS BEST FOR THE GREATEST NUMBER OF GUYANESE. TO CONFUSE GUYANESE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 GEORGE 01741 01 OF 02 311704Z

SOCIALISM WITH THE SYSTEM IN THE SOVIET UNION WAS LIKE CONFUSING THE RELIGION OF BILLY GRAHAM WITH THAT OF POPE PAUL. GUYANA WOULD DEVELOP ITS OWN BRAND OF SOCIALISM.

4. HE COMPLAINED OF WHAT HE SAID APPEARED TO BE OFFICIALLY INSPIRED LEAKS TO THE US PRESS (HE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY A "US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT" ITEM OF LAST DECEMBER) WHICH HAD THE EFFECT OF DISCREDITING GUYANA. TO INSINUATE THAT GUYANA WAS A TOOL OF ANY

OTHER POWER WAS ERRONEOUS AND AN EXHIBITION OF DISRESPECT.
SUCH PRESS ARTICLES REFLECTING A NEGATIVE USG ATTITUDE MADE IT
EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR GUYANA TO GET CREDIT FROM INTERNATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS.

5. BURNHAM CITED THE MESSAGE WHICH AMBASSADOR KREBS HAD DELIVERED
FROM THE SECRETARY ON BOXING DAY (DECEMBER 26) LAST YEAR AS A
PRIME EXAMPLE OF HOW TO PROVOKE A NEGATIVE RESPONSE FROM HIM.
SUCH MESSAGES CAST ALLUSIONS ON HIS AND GUYANA'S INDEPENDENCE
AND INTEGRITY. HE ALSO COMMENTED THAT THE EMBASSY'S CLOSE
RELATIONS WITH LEADERS OF HIS CLANDESTINE OPPOSITION COULD NOT
BE EXPECTED TO CREATE CORDIAL RELATIONS. IT WAS EMBARRASSING FOR
HIM TO BE CONFRONTED AT THE EMBASSY'S FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION
BY "SOMEONE LIKE BALWANT SINGH" WHO IS ACTIVELY WORKING TOUNDER-
MINE HIS GOV'T AND IS UNDER INDICTMENT FOR "EMBEZZLEMENT" (SIC)

6. BURNHAM SAID GUYANA HAD NO HOSTILITY AGAINST THE US. A LARGE
PROPORTION OF GUYANA'S IMPORTS COME FROM THE US AND IT SELLS
BAUXITE TO THE US. GUYANA PAYS ITS DEBTS AND MEETS IT OBLIGATIONS;
THEREFORE THE TWO COUNTRIES SHOULD HAVE GOOD BILATERAL RELATIONS.
I EXPLAINED THE EMOTIONAL AND ... CONTINUED

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 GEORGE 01741 02 OF 02 311704Z

65 42

ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 IO-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

ARAE-00 CIAE-00 SP-02 EB-03 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-01

DODE-00 PM-03 L-01 EUR-08 AF-04 NEA-07 H-01 DHA-02

ACDA-10 IGA-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /080 W
----- 054572

P R 311400Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3329

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 2 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1741

LIMDIS

POLITICAL REACTION IN THE UNITED STATES TO CERTAIN VOTES AND OCCURRENCES AT THE UN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORA, ESPECIALLY WITH REFERENCE TO ISSUES SUCH AS THE "ZIONISM AS RACISM" AND PUERTO RICO ISSUES. BURNHAM RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT THE US AND GUYANA, GIVEN THEIR DIFFERENT APPROACHES, WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF SOME ISSUES INCLUDING THOSE AFFECTING THE MIDDLE EAST, SOUTHERN AFRICA AND EAST TIMOR. HE COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO CRAWL ON HIS KNEES TO OBTAIN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

7. TO IMPROVE US-GUYANESE RELATIONS, THE USG SHOULD DO WHAT IT COULD TO ENSURE OBJECTIVE AND ACCURATE MEDIA COMMENTARY ON GUYANA AND SHOULD "FIND A WAY TO RESUME ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO GUYANA". HE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE USG DIDNOT CONTROL THE US MEDIA, BUT ASKED THAT US OFFICIALS NOT SPREAD FALSEHOODS ABOUT GUYANA. LATER IN THE CONVERSATION, HE RETURNED TO THE ASSISTANCE ISSUE, EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOOD CROPS LOAN AND THE SIGNIFICANCE THAT THE UPPER MAZARUNI HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT COULD HAVE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 GEORGE 01741 02 OF 02 311704Z

FOR GUYANA'S ECONOMY. HE MENTIONED THE MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAM, BUT IT WAS EVIDENT THAT THIS WAS OF LESS IMPORTANCE TO HIM THAN THE FOOD CROP LOAN.

8. WITH REFERENCE TO THE GREAT POWERS, BURNHAM SAID GUYANA'S POLICY WAS TRULY NON-ALIGNED AND WOULD REMAIN SO. HE DID NOT LIKE MANY THINGS ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION. HE SAID THAT HIS MAY 26 SPEECH HAD MADE CLEAR GUYANA'S INTENTION TO REMAIN NON-ALIGNED AND THAT HIS DELEGATION'S PERFORMANCE AT COLOMBO WAS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THIS. IN HIS COLOMBO SPEECH, HE HAD SPOKEN HIS MIND WITH RESPECT TO THE SOVIET UNION, THE UNITED STATES AND THE ARABS. HE APPEARED SURPRISED WHEN I MENTIONED HIS SPEECH HAD NOT YET BEEN PUBLISHED IN GUYANA AND SAID HE WOULD SEND ME A COPY (WHICH WAS DONE). THE SPEECH FINALLY APPEARED IN THE PRESS AUGUST 29.

9. GUYANA'S RELATIONS WITH BRAZIL AND VENEZUELA HAD IMPROVED IN RECENT MONTHS, BUT BURNHAM REMAINED WORRIED ABOUT VENEZUELAN MILITARY LEADERS. HE FEARED THEY MIGHT ACT AGAINST GUYANA REGARDLESS OF THE POLICIES OF THE CIVILIAN GOVT. HE ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER SURINAM'S ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN ARMS AND BUILD UP ITS MILITARY FORCE. HE MADE NO MENTION OF US ARMS SALES TO SURINAM. I TAKE THIS TO MEAN THAT HE HAD ACCEPTED OUR EARLIER EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING FMS.

10. COMMENT: BURNHAM WAS CORDIAL AND TALKED FREELY DURING OUR CONVERSATION. THAT I WAS PERSONALLY ACQUAINTED WITH LEADERS OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS DATING BACK TO THE EARLY

1960'S WAS CLEARLY HELPFUL IN CREATING AN EASY ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH TO TALK. AFTER TWENTY MINUTES, HE ORDERED RUM FOR US AND ASKED HIS SECRETARY TO HOLD CALLS AND DELAY HIS OTHER APPOINTMENTS. BURNHAM APPEARS TO BE OBSESSED WITH THE UPPER MAZARUNI HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT AND WHAT IT COULD MEAN FOR GUYANA'S DEVELOPMENT. ALTHOUGH HE SAID WHAT HE WOULD NOT DO TO OBTAIN FUNDS, I.E. CHANGE GUYANA'S SOCIALIST ORIENTATION, SWITCH TO SUPPORT OF THE US ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES AT THE UN OR "CRAWL ON HIS KNEES" TO OBTAIN US AID, HE DID NOT STATE WHAT HE WOULD DO TO IMPROVE RELATIONS AND OBTAIN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

11. BURNHAM'S PRIDE AND SUPER-EGO, OBVIOUS BEHIND HIS WORDS, WOULD NOT PERMIT HIM TO ADMIT THAT PART OF THE CURRENT PROBLEM IN US-GUYANESE RELATIONS MIGHT BE SOME OF HIS OWN POLICIES AND ACTIONS.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 GEORGE 01741 02 OF 02 311704Z

AFTER HE SPOKE OF US PRESS TREATMENT OF GUYANA, I REMEINDED HIM THAT GUYANA'S PRESS FREQUENTLY CARRIED DISTORTED OR FALSE REPORTS ABOUT THE US. DURING THE PAST THREE MONTHS, WHILE SOME CRITICISM OF THE US OCCASIONALLY HAS APPEARED, THE TONE OF COVERAGE GIVEN THINGS AMERICAN HERE HAS IMPROVED SHARPLY OVER WHAT IT WAS DURING THE EARLY MONTHS OF THIS YEAR. ALTHOUGH BURNHAM DID NOT MENTION THIS, HE PROBABLY CONSIDERS THIS AS A STEP TOWARD IMPROVING HIS GOVT'S RELATIONS WITH THE US. BY STRESSING GUYANA'S NON-ALIGNMENT AND REPEATING THAT HE DOES NOT INTEND TO ADOPT THE SOVIET SYSTEM FOR GUYANA, HE APPEARED TO BE TRYING TO REASSURE THE US ABOUT HIS INTENTIONS. APPARENTLY, THE SOVIET UNION HAS PROVEN NOT TO BE FORTHCOMING WITH LARGE OFFERS OF CAPITAL (ALTHOUGH 27 SOVIET TECHNICIANS ARE REPORTEDLY DUE HERE IN LATE SEPTEMBER/EARLY OCTOBER TO EXAMINE POSSIBILITIES FOR ASSISTANCE). THE ARABS HAVE REPORTEDLY SHOWN DISINTEREST IN BEING SOURCES OF LARGE AMOUNTS OF DEVELOPMENT CAPITAL FOR THEIR LESS FORTUNATE THIRD WORLD COLLEAGUES. THESE REALITIES APPEAR TO BE IMPRESSING UPON BURNHAM THE REALITY THAT MUCH OF GUYANA'S DEVELOPMENT CAPITAL MUST BE SOUGHT IN THE WEST AND THAT THE US HOLDS THE KEY TO THE VAULTS OF MAJOR LENDING INSTITUTIONS
BLACKEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, SOCIALISM, PRESS COMMENTS, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976GEORGE01741
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760330-0731
From: GEORGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976084/aaaaacvo.tel
Line Count: 264
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 MAY 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <21 OCT 2004 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BURNHAM COMMENTS ON GUYANA'S POLICIES AND RELATIONSHIPS SUMMARY: DURING A DISCUSSION WITH ME AUGUST 25, PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM ATTRIBUTED THE DETERIORATION IN US-GUYANES
TAGS: PFOR, GY, US, (BURNHAM, L F S)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006